

FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125



Assessor's Number 0076000009 USGS Quad Boston N. Area(s) Form Number 723

Town Lexington

Place (neighborhood or village)

Address 79 North St.

Historic Name William Locke House

Uses: Present Residential

Original Residential

Date of Construction 1832

Source Lexington Valuation lists; dated beam

Style/Form Greek Revival

Architect/Builder

Exterior Material:

Foundation Fieldstone

Wall/Trim Wood Clapboard

Roof Asphalt Shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures Attached garage

Major Alterations (with dates)

Side and rear additions (dates unknown)

Condition Good

Moved ☒ no ☐ yes Date

Acreage 1.2 A.

Setting On a wooded lot at a bend of a narrow historical street; nearby houses are 20th century

Recorded by Nancy S. Seasholes

Organization Lexington Historical Commission

Date (month / year) February 1998

BUILDING FORM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION ☐ see continuation sheet

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

79 North St. is one of three side-gabled Greek Revival cottages in Lexington with wall dormers (the other two are at 241 Grove St. [MHC #748] and 185 Burlington St. [MHC #745]), although in this case the dormers appear to have been added above the eyebrow windows instead of being integral wall dormers. The original house is rectangular, 1½ stories, three-by-one bays, and side-gabled with a center rear chimney. It is set on a fieldstone foundation, clad with wood clapboards, and roofed with asphalt shingles. At the east end is a side-gabled addition with a ridge chimney and at the rear a long front-gabled addition. A breezeway connects the side addition and the two-car garage. The center entrance in the main block has an elaborate surround with a molded cornice, half-length sidelights, and side pilasters with a Greek fret design similar to that at 241 Grove St. (MHC #748), on a number of houses on Massachusetts Ave. in East Lexington, and in Pl. 28 of Asher Benjamin's *Practical House Carpenter*. Most windows are 2/2 double hung sash.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE ☐ see continuation sheet

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

This house was built by William Locke (1805–1890), a grandson of Amos Locke (1742–1828), whose house had stood on approximately the same site. Although tradition holds that this was Amos Locke's house, Lexington assessors' records indicate that William Locke, who inherited the Amos Locke property, was assessed more in 1833 for a "new house," strongly suggesting that this house was built the preceding year. This date is confirmed by the fact that "Oct. 20, 1832" is carved on a large supporting beam in the basement of this house and that an 1889 paper by a Locke descendant says that the old Locke house was taken down about 1830 and this one built in its place. The Lockes had come to Lexington from what is now Burlington in the 17th century and by the 19th century owned about 200 acres in vicinity of North, Adams, and Lowell streets. William's brother Nichols, for example, had a farm that included most of the land now Willards Woods and would soon build the house now at 66 North St. (MHC #724) and his brother Stephen would later have a house and farm at what is now 130 Burlington St. (MHC #744). William's father Stephen, who had apparently lived with his parents in the old house on this site, had run what was known as the Locke mill—a planing mill that produced interior moldings—on the site of the house now at 74 North St. After William's death this house was occupied by his unmarried children, Austin William (b. 1852) and Emily (b. 1841). It is said that Emily, a tidy housekeeper, objected to the mess Austin made when taking a bath in the kitchen so Austin created an outdoor bathtub in the brook under the mill. In 1954, after repeated vandalism, the Locke mill was taken down.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES ☒ see continuation sheet

Benjamin, Asher. *The Architect, or Practical House Carpenter* (1830). New York: Dover Publications, 1988.

Joan Goldmann, personal communication 1998.

Hudson, Charles. *History of the Town of Lexington*. Revised and continued to 1912 by the Lexington Historical Society. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1913. 2: 369, 372, 375.

Kelley, Beverly Allison. *Lexington: A Century of Photographs*. Lexington, Mass: Lexington Historical Society, 1980. 18–19. Lexington Valuation Lists. 1831–36, 1841, 1845.

Locke, Herbert G. "Amos Locke." *Proceedings of the Lexington Historical Society* 1 (1889): 67–72.

☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

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Town
Lexington

Property Address
79 North St.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES (continued)

"Things to Remember." *Lexington Minute-man*.

Willard, Edith W. Letter to the Editor. *Lexington Minute-man*, 15 July 1954.



Roll #5, Negative #4



Roll #7, Negative #24